

INTRODUCTION

The City of Fort Bragg (City) determined that a program-level environmental impact report (EIR) was required for the proposed Best Development Grocery Outlet Project (Project) pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The project-level analysis considers the broad environmental effects of the proposed Project. This EIR examines the planning, construction and operation of the Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following provides a brief summary and overview of the Project. Chapter 2.0 of the Draft EIR includes a detailed description of the Project, including maps and graphics. The reader is referred to Chapter 2.0 of the Draft EIR for a more complete and thorough description of the components of the Project.

The Project site is located at 825, 845, and 851 S. Franklin Street in the City of Fort Bragg, Mendocino County, California. The northern portion of the Project site contains an existing structure and pavement and the southern portion of the site is vacant with a dirt driveway. A 16,436 square-foot (sf) vacant former office building and associated 47-space parking lot are located in the northern half of the site. The building, locally referred to as the “Old Social Services Building”, has not been leased since 2010 but has been used as storage since then. Wooden fencing is currently located along the western property line and adjacent south of the building. Shrubs and trees are located in the northern portion of the site. The southern-most lot is vacant with one-third bare soil and two-thirds covered with annual grasses and forbs with scattered shrubs.

The proposed Project includes demolition of the existing 16,436-sf vacant former office building and parking area and subsequent development and operation of a 16,157-sf Grocery Outlet (retail grocery store) with associated improvements on the Project site. Grocery Outlet is a value grocer, meaning that it sells brand name products at bargain prices due to their opportunity buying style. Associated improvements include a parking lot, loading dock and trash enclosure, circulation and access improvements, and utility infrastructure.

The Project would also include a merger of three existing parcels (lots) to create one 71,002 sf (1.63 acres) parcel to accommodate the footprint of the proposed retail store within the resulting parcel. Additionally, the proposed Project will be subject to Design Review. The future Design Review by the City would include a review of the proposed site plans as they relate to the Citywide Design Guidelines requirements.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROJECT

Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the project or to the location of the project which would reduce or avoid significant

impacts, and which could feasibly accomplish the basic objectives of the Project. The alternatives analyzed in this EIR include the following three alternatives in addition to the Project:

- No Project (No Build) Alternative;
- Building Reuse Alternative;
- Decreased Density Alternative.

A comparative analysis of the Project and each of the Project alternatives is provided in Table ES-1 in Chapter ES of the Draft EIR. As shown in Table ES-1, the No Project (No Build) Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative. However, as required by CEQA, when the No Project (No Build) Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, the environmentally superior alternative among the others must be identified. Therefore, the Building Reuse Alternative and Decreased Density Alternative both rank higher than the proposed Project. Comparatively, the Decreased Density Alternative would result in less impact than the Building Reuse Alternative because it provides the greatest reduction of potential impacts in comparison to the proposed Project. However, neither the Decreased Density Alternative nor the Building Reuse Alternative fully meet all of the Project objectives. While the City recognizes the environmental benefits of the Decreased Density Alternative, this alternative would not result in the amount of commercial uses that are identified in the Project objectives under full buildout of the Project.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

The Draft EIR addressed environmental impacts associated with the Project that are known to the City, were raised during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) process, or raised during preparation of the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR discussed potentially significant impacts associated with aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gases and climate change, land use, noise, transportation and circulation, and utilities.

During the NOP process, several comments were received related to the analysis that should be included in the Draft EIR. These comments are included as Appendix A of the Draft EIR, and were considered during preparation of the Draft EIR.

The City received 27 comment letters regarding the Draft EIR from public agencies and other parties. Additionally, in April and May of 2023, additional public comments were provided to the City. Many of the comments did not address the Draft EIR. However, five additional comments pertained to the Draft EIR and associated analysis. The 27 comment letters received during the 45-day Draft EIR comment period, as well as the five additional comments (Letters BB through FF) received several months after the close of the comment period, are identified in Table 2.0-1 of this Final EIR. The comments received during the Draft EIR review processes are addressed within this Final EIR.